

The National Rural Development Partnership (NRDP) is a network of established and emerging rural institutions that work together to strengthen rural America. The principal members of the network are State Rural Development Councils in 40 of the 50 states.

Each of the State Councils, which are comprised of active members from a broad range of rural development-related organizations, is served by a full-time executive director. States differ in how they are organized and in the rural issues they decide to address.

This profile is one in a series highlighting the work of the State Councils.

For more information about the National Rural Development Partnership:

National Partnership Office

1400 Independence Ave., SW
Room 4225-S, Mail Stop 3205
Washington, DC 20250
Phone: 202-690-2394
Fax: 202-690-1262

World Wide Web:
<http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/nrdp>



**National Rural
Development
Partnership**

State Profile

Kansas Rural Development Council (KRDC)

The Kansas Rural Development Council (KRDC) was founded in 1990 as part of the White House Initiative on Rural Development. Kansas was one of the eight states selected to pilot the program. Since that time, KRDC has proved to be an invaluable resource that links together statewide partners and has helped enhance the quality of life for more than 1 million rural Kansans. KRDC remains dedicated to the process of improving the economic and social well being of rural Kansans.

KRDC's mission is to bring together the resources of local, state, federal, and tribal governments as well as the private and non-profit sectors in order to effectively promote grassroots rural development through collaboration and the support of its membership.

The Council provides: 1) a framework for public and private resources to promote rural development; 2) a forum for effective collaboration between the various entities to identify rural issues and meet rural needs; 3) leadership in making strategic use of available resources, and 4) a focal point for identifying and addressing interdepartmental and intergovernmental



barriers to implementing a long-term strategy.

The Council's membership consists of representatives from most of the public resources available in the state, which allows it to readily pool resources to increase efficiency in execution of its objectives. With participation from local government and the private sector, KRDC is informed of local problems and can respond to meet those needs. Recent projects include: the Rural Healthcare Initiative, Kansas Housing Partners, Native American Housing Forums, and the Rail Abandonment program.

Contacting KRDC

Steven Bittel

Executive Director
Kansas Rural Development
Council
1200 S.W. Executive Drive
P.O. Box 4653
Topeka, KS 66604-0654
Phone: (785) 271-2770
Fax: (785) 271-2719
Email: krdc@cjnetworks.com
Web site: www.ksrdc.org

KRDC membership consists of approximately 50 representatives from governmental, private, and non-profit organizations from across the state. The Council's Executive Committee is comprised of the following individuals and organizations:

- ▼ U.S. Small Business Administration, Wichita District Office
- ▼ Kansas Electric Power Cooperative
- ▼ Huck Boyd National Institute for Rural Development
- ▼ Kansas Natural Resource Council
- ▼ Kansas State University
- ▼ Kansas Department of Commerce & Housing, Community Development Division
- ▼ Kansas Farm Bureau
- ▼ Private Sector
- ▼ Kansas Department of Transportation
- ▼ U.S. Department of HUD
- ▼ Kansas Dept. of Health and Environment
- ▼ USDA Rural Development



Printed on recycled paper

NRDP *State Profile*

July 2001

Kansas Rural Development Council at Work

Rural Healthcare Initiative

Recognizing that changes in healthcare delivery have led to changes in the physical and economic vitality of rural Kansans, KRDC organized a meeting of statewide healthcare organizations and providers. At the meeting, Jay Barnes, then-Associate Director of the Wichita VA Medical and Regional Office Center and Vice-Chair of KRDC, emphasized VA's movement toward community-based outpatient clinics. Ensuing dialogue prompted action to find providers to render managed care services to veterans. By August 1998, contracts for a facility to be located in Hays, Kansas were signed. Today, the clinic serves an estimated 1,500 area veterans who previously had to travel more than 100 miles to receive treatment.

Kansas Housing Partners

KRDC, in cooperation with 10 other organizations, formed Kansas Rural Housing Partners to help local residents meet their housing goals. A major accomplishment of Kansas Housing Partners has been the creation of the Housing Information Request Form, a comprehensive information request form that streamlines the application process for those seeking housing assistance. By submitting this form, potential applicants have their request reviewed by all participating agencies. These agencies then provide information directly to the applicants so that their housing needs can be met. The form is specifically designed to aid low- and moderate-income households as well as senior citizens, persons with disabilities, and others in need of financial assistance to maintain or obtain adequate housing. The Housing Information Request Form is available through KRDC's web site.

Native American Housing Forums

Working with the National Rural Development Partnership, KRDC hosted a series of public housing forums designed to increase home ownership among Native Americans. Enlisting the aid of Kansas Housing Partners, KRDC engaged agency representatives in a roundtable discussion with tribal leaders and tribal housing authority directors. In addition to discussing available housing programs, they also discussed the problems facing Native Americans, their reservations, and trust lands. As a result of the forums, attending agencies have been able to maintain an ongoing dialogue with Native American tribes and have had continued discussions on the specifics of their programs.

Rail Abandonment

KRDC sponsored a Rail Forum that brought together shippers, producers, county commissioners, state officials, and rail management. The purpose of the forum was to address the accelerating rate of rail abandonment, which has caused a loss of freight rail service to many small rural communities in Kansas. Although agricultural production has doubled since 1980, 27 counties in the heart of grain production region of Kansas are enduring serious rail loss problems. KRDC developed a monograph that communicated the long-term issues and contained useful information presented at the forum. In addition, KRDC will create a task force to address the looming possibility that Kansas could lose another 1,000 miles of track in the next few years.

"There are programs available to us that we are not aware of, so knowledge is going to be the power that we need to develop our community."

Housing Contractor from Southeast Kansas